



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局

Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

本局檔號 Our Ref.: (199) in EDB(SDCT)2/ADM/60/1/1(9) 電話 Telephone:

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3 December 2013

To: Supervisors/Principals of all Schools

Dear Supervisor/Principal,

Stay Vigilant against Avian Influenza A (H7N9)

Upon the confirmation of a case of human infection with avian influenza A (H7N9) by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health, the Government has raised the response level under the Government's Preparedness Plan for Influenza Pandemic from "Alert" to "Serious". A copy of the letter issued by the CHP today is enclosed at the Appendix for your reference.

In view of the latest development of the disease, we would like to urge schools to continue strengthening the preventive measures against the spread of avian influenza in schools, disseminate the related information to parents and enlist their cooperation to upkeep students' personal and environmental hygiene so as to tie in with the precautionary measures taken by schools. Major measures include:

- cleanse and disinfect the school premises thoroughly and always keep the school environment clean and hygienic;
- remind parents to check the body temperature of their children before sending them to school every day and return the temperature record sheet to the school;

- advise parents when their children develop symptoms of influenza-like illness, they should seek medical advice promptly and the affected students should avoid returning to the school;
- ensure the latest personal and contact information of students/ staff were collected and report to the CHP according to the existing mechanism in case of suspected outbreak.

In addition to the *Guidelines to school on prevention of Communicable Diseases and Management of Avian Flu in Schools* mentioned by the CHP in the Appendix, schools may refer to the “Handbook on Prevention of Avian Influenza in Schools” posted on our website for further details on the prevention of the disease. The handbook can be accessed via the following path:

EDB Homepage > School Administration and Management > Administration > About School > Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools

We have all along attached great importance to the health of our students and we liaise closely with the CHP on the development of the disease. Other than issuing letter to schools, we disseminate the information to relevant school bus operators from time to time, reminding them to stay vigilant against the spread of the disease. To enhance schools’ and parents’ awareness of the prevention of the disease, we have also jointly organized health talks with the CHP. We will continue to keep in close contact with the CHP and release the latest information on communicable diseases to schools.

For enquiries, please contact your respective Senior School Development Officers/Senior Services Officers.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms M F LI)
for Secretary for Education

監測及流行病學處



**Surveillance
And
Epidemiology
Branch**

本署檔號 **Our Ref.** : (105) in DH SEB CD/8/6/1 Pt.27

3 December, 2013

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

**A Confirmed Case of Human Infection with Avian Influenza A(H7N9) virus and
Activation of Serious Response Level of Government's Preparedness Plan**

I would like to draw your attention to a confirmed case of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus in Hong Kong. The patient is a 36-year-old Indonesian maid. She lives with her employer's family in Hong Kong. The patient is now staying in intensive care unit. Her current condition is critical.

Preliminary epidemiological investigation revealed that the patient went to Shenzhen of Guangdong Province on 17 November. She bought a live chicken in a market and ate the chicken after cooking it with a friend in Shenzhen. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is investigating the source of her infection. According to available information, this is likely to be an imported infection. CHP is tracing the exposed close contacts of the patients and will provide them with chemoprophylaxis and put them under quarantine. So far, four of the close contacts had symptoms including cough, runny nose or sore throat but no fever and their specimens have all have been tested negative for avian influenza A(H7N9).

The Government has raised the influenza response level from "Alert" Response Level to "Serious" Response Level under the Framework of Government's Preparedness Plan for Influenza Pandemic.

Prior to this case, no human infections with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus were recorded in Hong Kong. According to the latest update from the National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China (28 November 2013), a total of 140 cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus have been reported.



衛生防護中心乃衛生署
轄下執行疾病預防及控
制的專業架構
*The Centre for Health
Protection is a
professional arm of the
Department of Health for
disease prevention and
control*

To prevent avian influenza and other respiratory illnesses, please kindly remind your children / staff to observe strict hand hygiene, avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes and avoid visiting wet markets with live poultry or contacting poultry especially when travelling to H7N9 virus affected areas. Wash hands frequently with liquid soap, especially before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied

by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing. In addition, the following measures are also advised:

- Avoid touching poultry/birds/animals or their droppings;
- Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water immediately in case of contact with poultry/birds/animals or their droppings;
- Build up good body resistance and have a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved through a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate rest, reducing stress and no smoking;
- Poultry and eggs should be thoroughly cooked before eating;
- Maintain good environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded places with poor ventilation if feeling unwell; and
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, furniture, commonly shared items and floor at least daily by using appropriate disinfectant (For non-metallic surface, disinfect with 1 part of household bleach in 99 parts of water, wait until dry and then rinse with water. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol).

Children / staff with recent history of contact with poultry or history of visiting wet markets with live poultry in avian influenza affected areas, should wear a mask and consult doctors promptly if they have respiratory symptoms, and inform the doctor of their exposure history. The affected children / staff should avoid returning to schools. You may wish to note that CHP has issued *Guidelines to school on prevention of Communicable Diseases* and *Management Avian Flu in Schools* which can be accessed at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_schools_kindergartens_kindergartens_cum_child_care-centres_child_care_centres.pdf and http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/management_ai_school_eng.pdf respectively.

If you notice any increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among children or staff, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

More information on avian influenza is available at the CHP website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk>).

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health